

## PENTECOSTAL POWER

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Pentecostal Power is the power of the Holy Spirit. It is the power of the indwelling Christ. It is the power of God working thru men surrendered to do his will and anxious to be used of him. To learn more of Pentecostal Power, let us look at the working of that power on the day of pentecost.

At that time we find a group of men who for three years had been trying to follow Christ but whose life as characterized by mistakes and sins. Fear, failure, cowardice, and defeat mingled with their work and revealed the fact that the human nature of each often ruled. They wished to work for Christ yet self was ever prominent in their endeavors.

We need only to look at Peter denying Christ, or James and John trying to supercede their fellow disciples by selfishly desiring the right and left hand of Christ in glory, or not Thomas doubting his Master's resurrection to know that their lives were not entirely ruled by the will of God.

But let us look at these men after Pentecost. From that time they are changed. Selfishness and hesitancy do not hinder their work, they no longer lack the courage necessary to preach Christ. Doubt is past. They speak what they do know. No amount of ridicule can cause Peter to deny his Lord now. Persecution and imprisonment cannot turn the disciples from the work but only causes them to redouble their efforts. What has wrought this change? What is Pentecostal Power?

When Christ ascended he told his disciples to tarry in Jerusalem until endued with power from on high. That power came on Pentecost and it was the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead come to take possession of each life and to use it. It was the very *presence of God within* the disciples.

The power they received was not so much something they possessed as something that possessed them. Their new power consisted in being guided and ruled completely by God. It was the flesh brought into subjection to the Holy Spirit.

The power that changed the first followers of Christ is the power that is needed by his followers now, and we cannot but know that too many church people do not have it. When we look into our churches it is painfully evident that willingness to sacrifice for Jesus' sake is sometimes lacking. We find our people living before Pentecost. They want to serve Christ but self rules their lives. They doubt like Thomas, deny like Peter, and like James and John they care more for a seat at the Master's side in glory than for a place at his side as the servant of men.

Occasionally their zeal breaks forth and like Peter they are sure they would die for the Savior rather than forsake him, but at the next turn the flesh has lead them into a miserable failure akin to that of Peter on the night of trial, and has left them weeping over their defeat, discouraged, and for the time

powerless to do God's will. Time after time they are reminded that the flesh, self, and sin rule their lives and they cannot do the thing they would. They are living in the seventh chapter of Romans and are strangers to the remedy in the last verse and in Romans VIII.

The power of Pentecost, the Holy Spirit is given us to subdue self and to transform our lives into a mighty power in the hands of God for the salvation of souls.

There are people who count one in the church membership, fill a pew on fine Sundays, work for self six days in the week, feel the loss of every dollar given to the Lord's work, lead in prayer when they must by repeating a form they committed some 20 years ago which form contains petitions sadly out of harmony with their lives. The amount of their personal work for souls consists in scolding their children and others for not doing better and in telling how long *they* have lead Christian lives. Pentecostal power is the power which converts such a person into a *Christian worker* living for Christ every day, preaching Christ by his life, by his daily work, by his family devotions, and by his association with men.

Pentecostal Power changes church work from from an irksome task to a joy, from a dull hopeless drag to the most happy, useful, and most blessed of work. It is the power that removes all fear of men and gives us a message to every one. If it be to a king or the equal of a king the Holy Spirit gives us a message and willingness and boldness to deliver it. If it be to the most degraded and filthy of human beings, the same power gives us a message with love and tenderness to deliver it as to a brother.

The Holy Spirit supplants our mean, fickle, half-hearted, human love for one another with the love of God that is willing to sacrifice, that loves men's souls to that extent that nothing can hinder work for them. Pentecostal Power makes us lay down our lives for the brethren because we love them.

Why should we have it? Because we cannot accomplish God's plans without it. We cannot do his will without emptying our hearts of self and inviting the Holy Spirit to dwell within and use us. It is a pitiful sight to see one trying to serve God in his own instead of the Holy Spirit's power. He tries to do his duty as a Christian but he is in bondage to the first Adam. He tries to speak to souls about salvation but it is forced work and fails to reach the heart. He tries to pray but it seems a mockery. Let such a person give himself entirely into the hands of God and say, "Father, fill and use me." Then in the Spirit's power he lives a Christian life because he loves it and abhors sin. He speaks to souls of Christ because his heart is full and he cannot but deliver the message God has committed to him.

Brethren we owe it to our God to possess this power. He asks of us our best service. Without his Spirit we cannot serve him but with Him we can, like Paul, do all things

thru Christ who strengtheneth us. If we are without this strength we are needlessly if not willfully leaving undone the work it would enable us to do.

And this work is so great. At best we cannot do all that should be done. Under the pressure of the present needs it is wrong to do good when we might do better and it is sin to lead only a fair life when we might be reflecting the perfect life of Christ.

We owe it to the world to possess the Holy Spirit's power. The Macedonian cry, "Come over and help us," comes from the whole world. From heathen lands, from our cities from the east, and from the west, the whole world is ringing with the cry for help. "Come feed us the Bread of Life; show us the way of eternal life; teach us the will of God."

We cannot shut our ears to this cry and say we are not competent to work for souls. The call is to every Christian. God wants and the world needs from us a life of service, and it is our part to give our lives to Him, receive the power, and do the work.

How may we obtain this power?

1. We must desire it. "Hunger and thirst after righteousness and thou shalt be filled," likewise hunger and thirst for soul saving power and thou shalt receive it. Make it the greatest desire of your life to be used of God in that work and be ready to follow God's plan as to how it shall be done and it will be done.

Desire this power for Jesus' sake. Not that we may receive honor or reward but that we love souls. In desiring the Holy Spirit men often desire Him in a way that makes it impossible for them to receive Him.

We must desire the spirit as our Master and Guide not as our servant. We sometimes pray for God to *help* us in *our* work. Grant us thy *help* in our *church work*." Is our Lord pleased with such requests? He is not one to serve us but to rule us. Let us get out of the idea of using him and ask him to use us. Not so much desire the Holy Spirit as a *helper* in our work as a guide and master of our work. Before we can have Pentecostal power, we must from our hearts desire the Holy Spirit as the Master of our lives who is to control us entirely.

2. To have Him we must surrender to Him. We cannot expect God to guide and use us if we turn from his guidance. If we would have his guidance to morrow we must not turn from it to-day. If we would have his guidance in one matter we must not turn from it in another. If God has plainly revealed to me in any way that I should turn from some sin I cannot expect his guidance further till I do turn. If the Holy Spirit tells me to quit some filthy habit, I cannot expect him to use me effectually till I do quit it. If the Holy Spirit tells me to confess to the brother whom I have wronged I cannot expect to be used in his service till I yield. Yield, yield, yield. Receive the Holy Spirit's power by yielding to him.

3. And last of all ask for this power. Until we desire Him and are ready to yield